



CONTENT ANALYSIS OF DACOWITS INSTALLATION VISITS (1995, 1997, 2001)

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Background

- DACOWITS has compiled service members concerns through focus groups
 - ✓ One broad question – “If you had five minutes with the Secretary of Defense, what would you tell him?”
- Systematic analysis of selected DACOWITS reports
 - ✓ 1995, 1997, 2001
 - Convenience sampling – sites and focus group participants
 - Non-standardized, unstructured process

Objectives

1. Identify trends and major issues
2. Identify candidate topics for inclusion in future visits
3. Assess and make recommendations on the value of mining information on previous years
4. Provide interpretations and implications of the findings

“Data”

- DACOWITS reports
 - ✓ OASD letter to appropriate Service/Component
 - ✓ Installation visited; date of visit; member ID
 - Description of installation
 - ✓ Visit summary (top issues raised)
 - Focus group composition (varied)
 - Summary of discussion (notes – not verbatim transcript)
 - Equality management
 - Forces development & utilization
 - Quality of life

Methodology

- Sampled trip reports by Service and Component only
 - ✓ Within each of the three years
 - Multiple reports by Service & Component
 - ✓ Content categories developed from benchmark year 1997
 - 30 installations in 1997
 - At least 2 trip reports per Service and Component
 - Identified recurring themes
 - ✓ Total of 70 trip reports

1995	1997	2001
24	30	16
 - ✓ Independently reviewed
 - Compiled a final listing of core issues/themes

Results

- Overarching content areas [in order of mention across sites]
 1. Status/Career Issues
 2. Health Care
 3. Child & Family Care
 4. Quality of Life
- For each area more specific themes were identified
- Examples of comments (as summarized in reports)
 - ✓ Rough counts provided of number of reviewed installations reports in which each issue was mentioned

Status/Career Issues

Readiness, Assignment & Career Progression (68)

Administrative or secretarial work is often delegated to women even when they are members of technical teams. Such obstacles to performing job duties and responsibilities for which one is trained causes resentment and low morale; not learning skills to make rank. Women are frequently used in position outside of their MOS—a parachute rigger was assigned to run operations and not as a trainer - hurts career advancement and performance.

Marginalization, Stereotyping, Discrimination, Harassment (58)

There are persistent prejudicial attitudes and some hostility toward women in the military. [when my husband and I drive on base, the gate personnel always salute him and he is a civilian; It doesn't matter whether you're fit or not, ya'll aren't going to war anyway; when one women first reported she was told to make the coffee and take the men's clothes to the cleaners. Further, the supervisor asked "Is she pregnant? Does she have kids? Is she broken?"]

Isolation (33)

Over emphasis on sexual harassment has interfered with relations with coworkers—men are afraid to speak and work with or mentor and guide women because of fear of being accused of harassment; too much is called harassment such that superiors are reluctant to counsel, discipline, or mentor women.

Status/Career Issues

Mentoring (31)

Women lack but want mentoring (formal and informal – including a web site) from other women and men – useful for improving leadership skills, career progression and in handling problem situations.

Physical Fitness Standards (28)

Standards for measuring body fat need to be developed; Body fat measurement test are subjective—it depends on who is conducting the test, men are not subject to same standards; Taping is not fair. Menstrual cycle and post-pregnancy confounds. Body type not taken into consideration – especially ethnicity.

Uniform (20)

Uniforms do not fit properly and this detracts from professional military appearance.

Health Care

OBGYN Services (34)

Health care for women is inadequate – especially GYN care; accessibility and quality and waiting time; difficulty in obtaining referrals from nongyn Army doctors. Need to be educated on gyn wellness—especially junior enlisted women.

Confidentiality (5)

“There is an annual requirement for an OBGYN exam. . . whenever you need to update your record it is posted in public”; “request for PAP tests are posted on list for all to see.”

Other (6)

Specialty care is lacking.

Family members are not treated well.

Child & Family Care Quality of Life

Child & Family Care

Accessibility, Cost & Quality (43)

Need flexible hours – to accommodate PT, shift work, deployments, etc. Opening and 10 hour limit are problematic. “We need childcare services to fit the military schedule.”

Quality of Life

Housing (9)

Recreation (4)

Other (16)

Conclusions

- Greatest concerns related to career opportunities
 - ✓ Training, assignment, utilization
 - ✓ Want to be taken seriously as a member of the team
 - ✓ Want to progress and take on responsibility
 - ✓ Want barriers removed so as to achieve individual and unit readiness
- Health care
 - ✓ Related to marginalization (Status/Career)
 - Feel like an afterthought

Recommendations

- Methodological
 - ✓ Standardization of visit & report to enhance credibility and quality
 - Focus group participation and documentation varied
 - Sampling bias (for men) – hesitate to generalize
 - Record demographic info on participants
 - Gender, ethnicity/race, rank
 - Electronic format to facilitate analysis
 - ✓ Analyze themes from additional years
 - Establish a historical view of issues

Recommendations

- Substantive (caveat – focus on what’s wrong)
 - ✓ Interpersonal relations at work
 - Need for training, practice, & leadership example
 - Mentoring to reduce isolation and marginalization
 - Fear of false harassment claims
 - Deal with problem directly – not by avoidance or lectures
 - Need cohesion
 - ✓ Pregnancy
 - Management attention to fill short term gaps

Recommendations

- Substantive (continued)
 - ✓ Attitudes & behavior towards women and Reserves
 - Not 2nd class citizens but team members
 - Even subtle slights can crescendo into bigger problems
 - Uniform fit - marginalizes women
 - Paperwork processing for Reserves

Future Directions

- Future (and continuing) attention
 - ✓ assignment equity, career progression, subtle discrimination, understanding of fraternization, mentoring, health care, and child care.
- Alternative strategies for gaining information.
 - ✓ Monitor personnel and training data trends
 - ✓ Task force approach
 - Recommend demonstration projects and program and policy options for addressing some of the stubborn issues such as disruptions because of pregnancy, need for mentoring, deficits in health care, uniform changes, and so forth.

Future Directions

- Shift the image of DACOWITS
 - ✓ from a “bring forth the complaints” group to a “monitor the progress” advocate.
 - Less reliance on focus groups of service members and greater reliance on facts and figures from military leadership and Service and Defense policymakers.
- DACOWITS name “change?”
 - ✓ Focus no longer on introducing women into the Services but on promoting women (and men), Reservists (and Active) as valuable resources.
- Regardless of gender or component, our military personnel deserve appropriate training, development, maintenance, and support.